

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 1, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #5 - STAFF UPDATES

A. PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The City of Alexandria is considering an initiative to collaboratively articulate a vision for transportation investments and priorities over the next 10 years. A primary objective is mobility, a cornerstone of Eco-City Alexandria and the Transportation Master Plan. It is one of City Council's seven strategic focus areas in the 2010 Strategic Plan. To accomplish this goal, one of the City's objectives is to develop local, reliable funding mechanisms to support a fiscally constrained transportation plan.

An outreach effort is underway to solicit input from citizen and stakeholder groups on the proposed list of transportation projects that might be funded by a Commercial Real Estate Tax.

At its September and October meetings, the Commission received and considered a draft list of transportation projects for consideration to potentially be funded by a Commercial Real Estate Tax. The Commission received public input on the draft list of projects under consideration at a public hearing at its November 3, 2010 meeting.

To date, the City has reached out to eleven citizen and business groups attended by over 300 people include a Citywide meeting. In the coming months the City will be meeting with another 20+ groups to gain input and will hold another two Citywide meetings on December 8, 2010 and January 13, 2011.

B. TRANSITWAY CORRIDOR FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study is currently being conducted by the City of Alexandria for the purpose of investigating the feasibility of implementing dedicated corridor transit service in the city in three corridors – US 1 (Corridor A), Duke Street (Corridor B), and Van Dorn/Beauregard (Corridor C). The overall project is preliminarily anticipated to be complete by late 2011 with an accelerated schedule for Corridor C anticipated for completion by May 2011.

A Corridor Work Group (CWG) public meeting was held on November 18, 2010. This was the second meeting held by the CWG. The meeting included a review of existing conditions, preliminary evaluation criteria, and input on transitway options for Corridor C. During the meeting, multiple opportunities were provided to allow for public comment. As part of the transitway options discussion, both the CWG and public were asked where the transitway should connect to, and what places it should not impact. The CWG also agreed that the project should remain on its current schedule with a recommendation for Corridor C to be made by May, 2011. It was agreed that the results of the Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study would help to inform decision making for the Beauregard Corridor Plan. The next scheduled CWG meeting will be on January 20, 2011. At that time, the CWG will provide input on the preliminary transitway concepts developed by the consultant for Corridor C.

C. BEAURGARD CORRIDOR PLAN

City Planning & Zoning staff provided an update on the project to the Transportation Commission at its November 3 meeting. At that time, staff gave an update on recent meetings with the Beauregard Ad-hoc group, Planning Commission, City Council and next steps. Since then, the following has occurred:

Beauregard Ad-hoc Group Meetings:

The Beauregard Ad-hoc Group has met twice to discuss the formulation of a project Stakeholders Group. The group will include members of the Ad-hoc group as well as other members that will represent residents, property owners-developers and other members to advise staff on the preparation of the plan. It was agreed upon by members that the City would be an active partner with the Stakeholder Group as the plan moves forward.

Action Plan Presented to Council:

Staff presented an action plan / next steps to the City Council at its November 23 meeting. The work program identifies the relationship of the various Beauregard-related groups—BRAC-133, Beauregard Corridor Plan Ad-hoc group, the proposed new Beauregard Corridor Stakeholders Group, Housing Master Plan Advisory Group, and the High-Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group—and details the next steps and overall schedule.

Next Steps

Staff has recommended that as the plan moves forward, additional analysis will be needed. Consultant services will be needed to work with staff and the Stakeholders Group on developing design alternatives, testing design solutions, creating graphics, identifying progressive solutions to issues of sustainability, transportation and developing a plan document. The consultants will work with staff and the Stakeholders Group on developing recommendations on the land use mix, block sizes, street network, transit-oriented design, civic uses, retail areas, open spaces and pedestrian and bicycle network. Consultant services will also be needed in order to assess market demand, location, and operational considerations for a successful retail environment. Consultant services are expected to begin in the first quarter of 2011.

In addition, additional transportation analysis will be required. The transportation analysis encompasses the development and assessment of two year 2015 scenarios, one 2025 scenario and two 2035 scenarios. These scenarios will include revised land use assumptions, roadway improvements and transit enhancements. The scope of work includes conducting travel demand forecasting, generating operational models, summarizing the operational performance for each of the scenarios and identifying potential needed transportation improvements. Additionally, the consultant will have to prepare project documentation and participate in several meetings with City staff, the public and elected officials. Additional transportation analysis work is anticipated to begin in December 2010.

The additional work described above would begin in December 2010 and is expected to be completed in approximately 12 months.

D. PARKING UPDATE

On November 13, Alexandria City Council adopted a temporary reduction of parking meter rates in the Old Town Alexandria metered parking area. The measure will lower rates from \$1.75 per hour to \$1.25 per hour in areas where coin-only operated meters are located, until new multi-space parking meters (which provide options for payment) are installed. In areas where the new multi-space meters have already been installed, including the 100 and 200 blocks of King Street, the rates will remain at \$1.75.

At the November 9 Legislative Meeting, City Council considered an ordinance to institute a new parking policy which would require vehicles with disabled placards or license plates to pay meter fees when parking in a metered space. Currently, vehicles with disabled designations are not required to pay any meter fees in the City of Alexandria. After a discussion of the issue, Council decided to defer the issue for at least 30 days to allow the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) to finalize a recommendation on the proposed policy. The ACPD has formed an Ad Hoc Parking Committee to address the matter, and the proposed policy and any submitted ACPD recommendations will return for Council vote in January 2011.

D. BRAC-133 UPDATE

The official opening of the BRAC-133 facility at the Mark Center is now only ten months away, with plans for some personnel moving into the new building as early as July. Meanwhile, analysis of potential short and mid-term road improvements beyond those proffered with the Duke Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) has been completed. The recommendation by the BRAC-133 Advisory Group has been forwarded to City Council and will be presented December 14, 2010.

Analysis of long term improvements including HOV and HOT ramps at the Seminary/I-395 interchange is also underway by VDOT's general engineering contractor. Staff continues to work out issues with the Department of Defense (DoD) Transportation Management Plan (TMP), and have a draft Letter of Agreement for amending the TMP over time. The DoD has agreed in concept entering into a cooperative agreement on a non-competitive basis with DASH to provide

express transit service between the King Street Metro Station and the Mark Center. The details of that service are being negotiated.

The provision of traffic control officers at key intersections in the vicinity of the Mark Center during peak periods has significant potential to alleviate traffic congestion. The City is working to get commitments from DoD to fund this type of activity, as it has been proven as an effective means of preventing intersections from being blocked.

Impacts on Fire and EMS services in this part of Alexandria continue to be of major concern, especially with the upcoming opening of the BRAC-133 facility. Alexandria already depends on Arlington and Fairfax Counties to respond to incidents in the West End. The City continues to work towards getting funding from DoD to mitigate those impacts.